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Allegiances

ThunderClan

Leader
Crowstar - A black and white patched tom with blue eyes

Deputy
Jayfrost - A silver and white tabby tom with green eyes

Medicine Cat
Ivybreeze - A sleek, white she-cat with longer fur, and dark blue eyes

Warriors
Sootwhisker - A smoky gray tom with yellow eyes

Ashfang - A long-furred gray and white tom with darker gray flecks and yellow eyes

Stormfeather - A long-haired white she cat with gray flecks and yellow eyes (**Apprentice: Thornpaw**)

Cloudheart - A big fluffy black and white tom with blue eyes

Lionflame - A long haired ginger tabby tom with blue eyes (**Apprentice: Willowpaw**)

Leafshine - A dark tabby she-cat with green eyes (**Apprentice: Stonepaw**)

Russetfoot - A dark ginger tabby she-cat with yellow eyes

Alderflame - A dark ginger and white tabby tom with long fur and amber eyes

Brightflower - A sleek black she cat with green eyes (**Apprentice: Honeypaw**)

Hawkfeather - A gray and ginger she-cat with green eyes

Adderbreeze - A dark gray tabby tom with black stripes and green eyes

Petalstep - A gray and cream she-cat with a white chest and amber eyes

Flamefoot - A ginger tabby tom with light blue eyes (**Apprentice: Darkpaw**)

Tigercloud - A brown tabby tom with dark stripes and yellow eyes

Whitefrost - A white tom with yellow eyes

Lilywhisker - A gray and cream she-cat with long fur and blue eyes

Apprentices
Darkpaw - A sleek, long-furred black she-cat with amber eyes

Stonepaw - A long-haired gray tabby tom with a white chest and amber
eyes

Thornpaw- A sleek light brown tabby tom with pale green eyes

Honeypaw - A thick-furred yellow tabby she-cat with dark blue eyes

Willowpaw - A very light gray she-cat with blue eyes

Queens
Silvershade - A slender silver tabby she-cat with light blue-green eyes. Mother of Blackfur's kits, Snowkit and Nightkit

Willowtuft - A long-haired gray she-cat with a white chest and green eyes. Expecting Flamefoot's kits

Poppynose - A tortoiseshell and white she cat with green eyes. Expecting Adderbreeze's kits

Elders
Stormface - A white and gray patched tom with dark blue eyes

Snowpool - A deaf white she-cat with blue eyes

WindClan

Leader
Rainstar - A large gray and white tom with yellow eyes

Deputy
Hazelfang - A light brown she-cat with green eyes

Medicine Cat
Dawnheart - A yellow tabby she-cat with amber eyes

River Clan

Leader
Dapplestar - A tiny, sleek tortoiseshell she-cat with blue eyes

Deputy
Stonefall - A dark gray tabby tom with green eyes

Medicine Cat
Mintpool - A white she-cat with green eyes

ShadowClan

Leader
Lilystar - A black and white patched she-cat with yellow eyes

Deputy
Swiftstripe - A large dark gray tabby tom with amber eyes

Medicine Cat
Acornpelt - A dark brown and white patched tabby tom with amber eyes (**Apprentice: Cloverpaw**)

Chapter 1

"WindClan fox heart!" Nightkit hissed. She barreled straight into Snowkit, knocking her right off her paws.

Snowkit stood back up and shook out her white fur. "Stop that!" She squeaked. "I don't want to play right now. I'm going to go to the medicine den and watch Ivybreeze work."

Nightkit sat down and sighed. "You never want to play anymore. Just because we're going to be apprentices soon doesn't mean you have to stop being fun."

Snowkit gave her sister an affectionate lick between her ears. "I'm sorry, I just don't really feel like playing right now."

"Okay fine," she mewed sadly.

Snowpaw watched as her mother, Silvershade, padded over to her and Nightkit. Her mother's silver tabby fur gleamed in the sunlight, and her eyes sparkled with affection. *I hope I'll look like her when I become a warrior.*

Nightkit stood up and paced excitedly around Silvershade. "Can you tell us about our father again?" She begged. "Please?"

Snowkit's voice caught in her throat. Her father was an evil cat. Her mother had told them the story of Blackfur when they were still very young, and ever since then, Nightkit had begged to hear the story again every chance she got. *I don't want to hear this again! I don't even want to remember that he's our father.*

Silvershade glanced at Snowkit for a moment, and sat down beside Nightkit. "Not now dear, maybe another time," she mewed gently.

Snowkit let out a sigh of relief. She hated it when people talked about her father. She got up and touched noses with Silvershade,

then turned towards the medicine den.

She pushed her way through the lichen that covered the entrance to Ivybreeze's den, and a strong, sweet smell washed over her. She padded inside and looked around, but didn't see the medicine cat anywhere. Snowkit realized that she was probably out collecting herbs, so she decided to come back later.

She left the medicine den and looked around, unsure of what to do now. A light brown tabby pelt caught her eye, and she recognized Thornpaw. He was carrying moss across the clearing, so Snowkit decided that she would go talk to him.

Snowkit made her way over to the young tom. "Hey," she mewed shyly.

Thornpaw's head whipped around to face her. "What do you want?"

Snowkit took a step back. *Why did I think this was a good idea?* "I just wanted to ask about what it's like to be an apprentice..."

Thornpaw narrowed his eyes. "Why do you care? It's not like you'll ever be one."

"What do you mean?"

Thornpaw rolled his eyes, then got right up in Snowkit's face. "Your family is evil. Blackfur was a killer, and everyone can already tell that you'll be just like him," He growled. "And I'm sure that Crowstar doesn't want any more murderers living in his clan."

Snowkit suddenly felt very small. She had no idea what to say. *I'm not like my father! I hate him!*

She was about to say something, but Willowpaw appeared beside her brother. "Leave her alone," she hissed at Thornpaw. "She hasn't done anything wrong, so stop tormenting her."

Thornpaw turned and hissed at Willowpaw. "Whatever. Just as long as she stays away from me." He picked his moss back up and

padded away.

Willowpaw turned to Snowkit. "Don't worry about him. He's annoying, but he just says whatever he can to make other cats feel bad."

Snowkit blinked warmly at Willowpaw. "Thanks," she mewed calmly.

Willowpaw dipped her head politely, then padded away.

Snowkit shook out her fur, then decided to go find Nightkit. Maybe she would want to spend some time with her.

"Nightkit!" She mewed excitedly.

Nightkit was sniffing at the fresh kill pile, which was well stocked considering that leafbare would be arriving soon.

"Hey, Snowkit!" She squeaked. "I have an idea. Follow me!" She sprinted off towards the dirtplace tunnel.

Snowkit thought that she already knew what her sister was planning. She followed Nightkit, her heart pounding in her chest. Why did she always have to get herself into trouble? Snowkit knew she had to stop her before she did anything stupid.

"Nightkit! Stop!" She whispered urgently.

Nightkit stopped running and swung her head around to face her.

Snowkit padded around her sister and blocked the dirtplace tunnel from her path. "You can't sneak out," she stated. "We'll be apprentices soon, and you might ruin that for yourself by leaving camp without permission again." Nightkit had managed to 'accidently' end up outside of ThunderClan camp multiple times before, and every time she got caught.

Nightkit sat down with a thud. "It's not fair," she mumbled.

Snowkit nudged Nighkits shoulder light-heartedly. "Come on, I'm sure we can find something fun to do in camp."

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Snowkit padded in circles excitedly around Ivybreeze. "Oh! I know this one! It's called borage," she mewed proudly, gesturing to a pile of purple flower stalks on the ground.

Ivybreeze purred happily. "That's right," she began. "You sure spend a lot of time in here, watching me work."

Snowkit bounced happily. "Yep! I like learning about all the different herbs. You must be the smartest cat in the whole clan to memorize all of this!"

Ivybreeze blinked warmly at Snowkit. "Well, I wouldn't quite say that..." She looked over Snowkit for a few moments, then took a deep breath. "Would you be interested in becoming my apprentice?"

Snowkit started in astonishment at the pretty white she-cat. She had never thought about being a medicine cat before, but it didn't sound like a bad idea. She already knew some of the herbs, and she had to admit that she enjoyed spending time in the medicine den. She had always looked up to Ivybreeze because she believed that she had the most important role in the clan!

Snowkit nodded excitedly. "Yes! I'd love to be your apprentice!" She could barely keep her paws from moving.

Ivybreeze touched noses with Snowkit. "I'm glad. It has been a pleasure to have you in here with me while I sort herbs."

Snowkit purred very loudly. "I have to go tell Nightkit!" She exclaimed. "She'll be so happy for me!" She mewed before bolting out of the medicine den.

"Nightkit! Nightkit! Guess what!" She squeaked when she saw her sister batting absent-mindedly at a pinecone.

Nightkit suddenly looked up, as if she had just been jolted back onto reality. "What is it?"

Snowkit bounced happily around Nightkit. "I'm going to be a medicine cat!" She exclaimed.

Nightpaw had a look of shock on her face that Snowkit didn't expect. "What? You mean we wont train to be warriors together?" She mewed sadly.

Snowkit froze, a feeling of regret washed over her. "Um, no, I guess not..." she mumbled. "But we will still be apprentices together." Snowkit was trying to stay positive, hoping that her sister would still be happy for her.

Nightkit stared at her for a moment, then calmed down a little bit. "Yeah I guess so. As long as this is what you want, I'm happy."

Snowkit felt relief wash over her. *I knew she would be happy for me.* "Thanks," she purred. She touched her tail to Nightkit's shoulder sympathetically. She knew that her sister would always be there for her, no matter what happens.

Chapter 2

"My father was not a bad cat!"

Snowkit jolted awake as she heard her sister's voice ring through the entire camp. Curious as to what was going on, she poked her head out of the nursery, and winced when she saw Nightkit standing face to face with Thornpaw. A feeling of dread crept over her as she realized exactly what they were talking about.

"You're just like him. How could you defend such an evil cat?" Thornpaw hissed impatiently. He placed around Nightkit, snarling and digging his claws into the dirt.

Snowkit watched in horror as Nightkit unsheathed her claws. It seemed as though the entire clan had stopped whatever they were doing to see what was going on. Stormfeather was sitting in a patch of sun with Lionflame. Leafshine was standing at the camp entrance with Russetfoot and Hawkfeather, all of which looked confused and alarmed. Even Crowstar looked like he had frozen mid-wash, with a shocked look on his face.

Nightkit let out a low growl, and bunched up her hind legs as if she was prepared to pounce any second.

Crowstar suddenly stood up and rushed towards to two quarreling cats. "There's no need to fight," he meowed quickly.

Snowpaw inhaled sharply as she flooded with relief. She knew that Crowstar would work it out. *He's always been really calm and understanding.*

Once Crowstar had managed to get the two cats to stop snarling at each other, he calmed down a little bit. He looked directly at Thornpaw first. "There was no need to start this argument. What Blackfur has done is now a part of the past, and it shall remain that way." The black and white tom blinked calmly at Thornpaw, then sent him away so he could speak with Nighkit.

Thornpaw muttered something to himself that Snowpaw couldn't hear, then padded away indignantly.

Crowstar then turned his attention to the tiny black and ginger she-cat. Snowkit strained to hear what they were saying, but it was no use. They were speaking much too quietly. Snowkit felt a pang of sadness wash over her as she thought about her father. She felt like no one in the clan would ever accept her for who she was, but instead hate her for her deceased kin's mistakes. Not to mention that it sent a chill down her spine every time Nightkit defended her father's actions. She tried to push the negative thoughts to the back of her mind, and remembered with a jolt that her apprentice ceremony would be today.

Snowkit padded outside of the nursery, and stretched in the warm sunlight that lit up the camp. Her mind was buzzing with excitement. *I'm going to be an apprentice!* She was planning on going to see what Ivybreeze was up to in the medicine den, but stopped when she heard her mother call to her.

"Snowkit!" She mewed gently.

Snowkit looked up and saw Silvershade standing by the camp entrance. She guessed that she had joined Russetfoot, Hawkfeather and Leafshine after the quarrel between Nightkit and Thornpaw. Snowkit rushed over to greet her mother, and touched noses with her.

"I'm going on a hunting patrol," she began. "I just wanted to let you know so you won't be wondering where I am."

Snowkit nodded enthusiastically. "You'll be back in time for my apprentice ceremony though, right?" She mewed hopefully.

Silvershade purred happily, and touched Snowkit's shoulder reassuringly with the tip of her tail. "I wouldn't miss it for the whole world."

Satisfied with that answer, Snowkit mewed a goodbye and padded away. The feeling of pure happiness that had consumed her not less than a few moments ago completely vanished when she noticed

Nightkit picking at a scrawny mouse from the fresh kill pile. She was instantly reminded of Nightkit's snarls and hisses as she outwardly defended Blackfur's murderous behavior. Nightkit had always been interested in her father's story ever since she was old enough to understand what happened, but now Snowkit was growing concerned. *What if she really is like him? What if* I'm *like him?* With a pang of worry, she swallowed the lump in her throat and took a deep breath. She knew what she wanted to do now.

Snowkit carefully approached the entrance to Crowstar's den, and called out to announce her presence. "Hello?"

Crowstar's deep meow sounded from inside. "Come in."

Snowkit pushed her way through the lichen that covered the entrance, and stepped inside. Crowstar was sitting in his nest, with an exhausted look on his face. She figured that there must be something bothering him.

The slim black and white tom beckoned her to come sit with him, so she padded over to him and dipped her head respectfully. She tried desperately to maintain her composure even though anxiety prickled her pelt.

Crowstar blinked calmly. "Hello, Snowkit. Is everything okay?"

Snowkit took a moment to think before she responded. She didn't want to sound like a mouse brain because she didn't really know what she wanted to say. "Yes, everything's fine..." she began. "I just wanted to talk to you about Blackfur."

Crowstar looked slightly surprised at her words, but was willing to discuss it with her nonetheless. "Very well. What about him would you like to talk about?"

Snowkit took another deep breath to calm herself down. "Well, I was just wondering if there was actually anything good about him..."

Crowstar gazed at her for a moment with nothing but pure understanding reflecting in his eyes. "He was definitely a smart cat.

He was an excellent hunter, and he truly cared about his family. You and Nightkit meant a lot to him, and so did your mother."

"So he wasn't just a bloodthirsty murderer like everyone says he was?" Snowkit had to know more. She wanted to know if her sister had a real reason to defend him, or if she agreed with all of the bad things he did. She didn't want to believe that her sister would think that he was right to kill all of those innocent cats.

Crowstar shook his head. "He did have many good things about him, but that doesn't change the fact that he was a killer."

"I understand that," she began. "I just had to know more about him."

Crowstar dipped his head. "I understand. It's good to be curious." He rested his tail on her shoulder. "You're a good cat, and it doesn't take much to tell that you'll be an important part of ThunderClan. Just because some cats don't understand that now doesn't mean it's not true, so all you have to do is stay confident in yourself and your abilities. The rest will work itself out."

Snowkit felt a swell of pride inside her chest. Her leader believes in her, so she should too. She felt comforted by the fact that Crowstar could see that she was her own cat, not just a shadow of her father. "Thanks," she purred.

Crowstar blinked kindly at her. "Of course. Now, I think that it's about time that I made you and Nightkit apprentices, don't you?"

Snowkit's heart skipped a beat. Shes been waiting for this for what felt like forever! "Oh, yes! I'm ready."

Crowstar stood up, and gave her a nod of approval. "Come on then. You should go get your sister."

Snowkit skittered out of the leader's den, and looked around the camp. She locked eyes with Silvershade for a moment, who immediately understood what was about to happen. She rushed into the nursery, then came back out with Nightkit on her paws. Snowkit rushed over to meet them, and felt a purr rumble in her throat when she saw the pride in her mother's eyes. She started

frantically cleaning both of her kits, but only Nightkit let out tiny mews of protest. Snowkit wanted to look presentable when she was being apprenticed in front of the whole clan.

Crowstar's booming meow sounded from the top of highledge. "Let all cats old enough to catch prey gather by highledge for a clan meeting!"

Snowkit approached her clan with Nightkit and Silvershade on her paws. *This is it! I'm finally going to be an apprentice!*

Crowstar focused his gaze onto Snowkit. "Please step forward."

She took a deep breath, then walked to the front of the gathered cats.

"Snowkit has decided to follow the path of a medicine cat," he stated. Murmurs of approval rose from the clan. "Snowkit, you have reached the age of six moons, and it is time for you to be apprenticed. From this day on, until you receive your medicine cat name, you will be known as Snowpaw. Your mentor will be Ivybreeze. I hope Ivybreeze will pass down all she knows on to you."

Snowkit felt her chest swell with pride. *I'm going to be a medicine cat!* She quickly padded over to Ivybreeze and touched noses with her. "I'm going to work as hard as I can!" She whispered enthusiastically.

Ivybreeze purred. "I have no doubt that you'll make me proud of you."

She felt incredibly confident as the clan called her new name. "Snowpaw! Snowpaw!"

The ceremony was repeated for Nightkit, who was now called Nightpaw. She was apprenticed to Adderbreeze, who looked pleased to have his second apprentice. Snowkit intended to keep the promise she made to her new mentor. She was going to learn as much as she could, and become a great medicine cat!

Chapter 3

Snowpaw glanced at her mother. Her eyes were glowing with pride, and she dipped her head respectfully. Snowpaw purred happily. She was finally an apprentice! Nightpaw was already heading out of camp with Adderbreeze, so she decided that she should start training with Ivybreeze. Her new mentor was standing by the medicine den, waiting for her to join her. Snowkit quickly padded over to her.

She was intercepted by two of the other apprentices before she could reach her mentor. The smaller fluffy black she-cat spoke first. "Hey! I'm Darkpaw, and this is my brother, Stonepaw." She gestured to the long haired gray tom beside her. "We just wanted to welcome you as an apprentice before you left for training."

Snowpaw felt her chest swell with happiness. She had always thought that the other apprentices would be more like Thornpaw, so it was a huge relief to meet these two cats. "Thanks," she purred.

Darkpaw dipped her head. "We'll leave you alone now. I'm sure you want to get started with your training," she joked.

Snowpaw nodded. "Yeah, Ivybreeze is waiting for me. I should get going."

Stonepaw blinked kindly at Snowpaw. "Alright. We'll see you around then. Have fun!" He mewed cheerfully.

The pair of cats mewed their goodbyes, then padded away. Snowpaw continued on her way to the medicine cats den, where her mentor was waiting. Together they made their way inside, and Ivybreeze led her to the place that she knew was the herb store.

Ivybreeze pulled out a pile of delicious smelling green leaves. "Do you know what these are?"

Snowpaw recognized them immediately, just because of the smell.

"That's catmint!"

Ivybreeze nodded. "Very good. Do you know what catmint does?"

Snowpaw paused for a moment to think. Although she had spend a lot of her time in the medicine den as a kit and she knew what some of the herbs were, she couldn't remember what many of them did. "No, I don't remember."

"It cures greencough. This is important for you to know especially now because leafbare is coming soon. Cats are most likely to catch greencough during leafbare, and we need to collect as much as we can before it gets too cold. The leaves will shrivel up and die, and they won't be of any use."

Snowpaw listened intently to everything Ivybreeze said. She wanted to remember everything her mentor told her, because she knew it would make her a better medicine cat in the end. "Got it. Where can we find some?"

"By an abandoned twoleg nest in our territory. It grows there every greenleaf."

"Okay, are we going to collect some today? I'd love to see the territory." Unlike Nightpaw, Snowpaw had never snuck out of camp before when she was a kit. She didn't want to get in any kind of trouble, and it was safe in camp anyways.

"I think that would be a good idea." Ivybreeze carefully put the pile of catmint back, and stood up. "Let's leave now, while there's still lots of daylight."

Snowpaw jumped up and followed her mentor out of the medicine den. *I'm finally going to see the territory!* As she passed the fresh kill pile, she realized that she hadn't eaten that day. She paused for a moment, but ended up deciding that she would eat when she got back. Snowpaw quickly padded after Ivybreeze, and together they entered the forest.

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Snowpaw pushed her way through the camp entrance after

Ivybreeze. The forest had been absolutely mesmerizing. All of the tall trees that she had only ever seen over the top of ThunderClan camp seemed much bigger when she was standing right below them. All of the different plants and bushes had been incredibly interesting. There were so many new scents and sounds that she'd never actually smelled before. The best part of her adventure was that her and Ivybreeze had brought home plenty of catmint between the two of them. That meant it would be easier to cure greencough during leafbare.

Snowpaw and Ivybreeze carried all of their catmint into the medicine den, and put it away in the herb store. Ivybreeze gave Snowpaw a nod of approval. "You did good today. You can go get something from the fresh kill pile if you'd like."

"Thanks!" She purred. "I'll bring something to the elders while I'm there." She turned and padded out of the den.

Snowpaw nosed through the fresh kill pile. She decided on a plump shrew and a squirrel for Stormface and Snowpool. The two elders were sitting outside of their den soaking up what could be the last little bit of warm sunlight until leafbare passes. She padded over to them and mewed a greeting.

Snowpool, who was deaf and obviously didn't hear her, saw her approach and dipped her head politely. Stormface let out a throaty purr. "Hello, Snowpaw. Are those for us?" He gestured to the fresh kill that she was carrying.

Snowpaw set the shrew and squirrel down in front of the elders. "Yep. I brought the fattest prey in the pile," she mewed cheerfully.

Stormface purred happily. "Thanks a ton." He picked up the squirrel and gave it to Snowpool, while taking the shrew for himself. Snowpool blinked kindly to show her thanks.

Snowpaw dipped her head politely, then turned to go back to the fresh kill pile and get something for herself. She stopped when she noticed that Adderbreeze was watching her with narrowed eyes from across the clearing. For a moment, they had unintentionally locked eyes, then he scoffed and padded away. Snowpaw's heart

dropped. Did he hate her too? Panic started to flood over her. What if every cat in the clan hates her? She took a deep breath, shook out her fur, and flexed her claws. She figured that since there was nothing she could do, there was no sense in worrying about it too much.

She continued on her way to the fresh kill pile, and picked out a mouse for herself. She settled down outside of the apprentice's den, and took a bite out of her prey. The sweet and delicious flavor sent a rush of warmth through her, and she suddenly remembered how hungry she had been. She was grateful that the hunting patrols had been successful that day. She was about to take another bite, but instead looked up when she noticed two cats approaching her.

Stonepaw and Darkpaw sat down in front of her. Stonepaw dipped his head politely. "Can we eat here with you?"

Snowpaw nodded. "Sure." She liked these two cats. So far, they were the only apprentices that had gone out of their way to talk to her.

The two siblings settled down next to Snowpaw with their prey, and began eating. They began a conversation with casual small talk, but eventually it evolved into an in-depth, humorous discussion. Snowpaw was grateful that there were two cats in her clan that she considered to be her friends. Maybe she didn't have to worry about whether or not people like her. As long as there are cats in her clan that care about her, that's all that matters.

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Sorry for the short chapter! I had planned on writing more, but some things got in the way and that didn't end up happening. Anyways, thanks for reading :) The next chapter should be posted on Monday.

Chapter 4

"I refuse to keep my nest anywhere near *them."* Thornpaw hissed.

By the time Snowpaw finished eating with Darkpaw and Stonepaw, it was getting dark and she was exhausted. She had gone into the apprentice's den with Nightpaw to settle down for the night. Snowpaw was supposed to sleep in the medicine den, but there was already an extra nest in the apprentice's den and Ivybreeze had offered to help her build her new nest the next day. So that meant she had to spend the night with *Thornpaw*.

Snowpaw just stared at him, speechless. She was yet again reminded of the fact that she wasn't wanted, because of her father. Only moments ago, she had felt like she was an important part of the clan thanks to Darkpaw and Stonepaw's kindness. Now that feeling had completely vanished, and she just wanted to shrink away from this whole thing.

Nightpaw hissed. "I wouldn't want my nest anywhere near yours either, flea pelt."

Thornpaw ignored her comment. "No cat wants you in here. Right, Honeypaw?" He gestured to the yellow tabby she-cat who was next to him, who was one of his two sisters. He looked expectantly at her, and didn't avert his eyes until she responded. She looked incredibly uncomfortable.

She glanced nervously at Snowpaw and Nightpaw for a moment, then flicked her gaze back down to her paws. "Yeah..." she muttered. There was something off about the way she was behaving.

Thornpaw's face was smug with pride. "See?"

Willowpaw interrupted him. "Leave them alone," she snapped. "Why do you have to pick on every cat that isn't exactly like you?"

Thornpaw looked like he was about to reply with some smug comment, but stopped when Stonepaw and Darkpaw entered the den.

Darkpaw looked around at all of the cats, then her eyes narrowed. "What is going on in here? Thornpaw, are you being rude to Nightpaw and Snowpaw again?" She growled.

Thornpaw once again looked like he had some kind of mouse brained retort, but was cut off by Stonepaw. "Why don't you just back off? You have no reason to hate them, they haven't done anything to you."

Thornpaw paused for a moment, his jaws parted slightly as if he was searching for something to say. Finally, he just scoffed and sat down in his nest. "Whatever. As long as they don't come anywhere near me," he grumbled. He curled up with his head on his paws, facing away from the other cats.

Darkpaw rolled her eyes. "Just ignore him." She padded over to her nest, followed by Stonepaw. She settled down, then looked back up at Snowpaw. "Hey, maybe we could spend more time together tomorrow?"

Snowpaw crawled into her temporary nest. "Yeah, that would be nice."

Darkpaw blinked happily, then tucked her head under her paws. In the corner of her eye, Snowpaw saw Nightpaw glare at Thornpaw before crawling into her nest. Snowpaw sighed. She was thankful that Stonepaw and Darkpaw had come in when they did. She was afraid that that their argument might have escalated. All of that aside, she felt a pang of sadness in her heart. She truly felt unwanted when she was around Thornpaw. She got comfortable, and closed her eyes. It took a while, but eventually she was lulled into a deep sleep.

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Snowpaw woke up to the sound of Ivybreeze calling her name. She looked up, eyelids still heavy with exhaustion, and saw her mentor's

head poked inside of the apprentice's den. Snowpaw shook her head gently, then stretched. "I'm coming," she mewed. She realized with a jolt that all of the other apprentices were already gone. Had she slept in?

She followed Ivybreeze to the medicine cat den, eager to begin her training. "So, what will we be doing today?" She mewed cheerfully.

Ivybreeze purred happily at Snowpaw's enthusiasm. "I have a few more herbs that I want to show you, then I'm afraid you'll have to start your apprentice duties."

Snowpaw flicked her tail happily. "Great!" Although most apprentices weren't very fond of changing moss or helping the elders with their ticks, she didn't have a problem with it. She was willing to do anything to help her clan, and she knew that apprentice duties were a neccessary part of clan life.

Ivybreeze pulled a few tiny black seeds, and showed them to Snowpaw. "Do you remember what these are? I told you about them when you were still a kit."

Snowpaw took a moment to think, then suddenly remembered what they were called. "Poppy seeds," she mewed confidently. "They put cats to sleep and help with pain and shock."

Ivybreeze looked surprised that she had remembered exactly what they did for a moment, then nodded. "That's correct. It's important to remember that when given in large amounts, it is possible to accidentally kill a cat. Especially young cats and kits, as they don't need as much as a full grown cat."

Snowpaw nodded. "Got it."

Ivybreeze carefully put them back, then pulled out a pawful of tiny white flowers. "I haven't shown you this before," she began. "It's called feverfew, and it cools fevers."

Snowpaw nodded, then learned forward to smell it. She wanted to memorize every herb and their scents. An unpleasant, bitter scent hit her nose.

Ivybreeze put the borage back, then returned with another small pile of green leaves that looked like misshapen ovals . "This is comfrey. It is very useful and does multiple things. It can be used to mend broken bones, and it also soothes pain from various things such as open wounds and aching joints."

Snowpaw once again leaned forward to inhale the extremely unpleasant scent. Once he was satisfied, he nodded slightly and Ivybreeze returned the comfrey to it's original place.

Ivybreeze began to explain various things about the herbs that she had previously shown Snowpaw, such as where to find them and when they are usually needed the most. Snowpaw listened intently, being sure that she was paying close attention to every word her mentor said. She didn't want to forget anything.

Eventually, Ivybreeze had finished training with Snowpaw and dismissed her to choose which apprentice duty she wanted to do. Snowpaw decided to help the elders remove their ticks, because she had always enjoyed spending time with them before. It would also give her the chance to try using mouse bile for the first time, and all though it smelled absolutely horrid, she was excited to see how it worked.

Snowpaw padded into the elder's den with a stick clamped in her jaws with a foul smelling piece of moss soaked in mouse bile carefully draped over the end.

Stormface was curled up around Snowpool, gently licking the top of her head. They both looked up when Snowpaw entered.

Snowpool dipped her head in greeting, and Stormface purred happily. "Greetings, Snowpaw. Are you here to help us with our ticks?"

Snowpaw nodded, and padded over to Snowpool first. She carefully placed her stick on the ground next to her. Snowpool noticed the moss soaked in mouse bile, and blinked kindly at Snowpaw. She ran her paws over Snowpool's soft, white fur, and felt for ticks. Eventually, she found one at the base of her tail. She pressed the moss onto the tick, and watched as it fell of without any struggle at

all. *That was kind of cool.*

She nodded at Snowpool to signal that she was finished, then moved over to Stormface.

Stormface got comfortable in his nest, and Snowpaw started looking for ticks. He turned his head slightly in her direction. "So, have you made friends with any of the other apprentices?"

"Yeah. Darkpaw and Stonepaw are nice," she mewed. "Thornpaw hasn't been very friendly though."

Stormface flicked his tail. "Oh, just ignore him. He's just like his father."

Snowpaw stopped for a moment. Adderbreeze was Thornpaw's father, and he hadn't exactly been friendly either. "Yeah, I guess so. They don't seem to like me very much."

Stormface turned his head to look at Snowpaw. "Do you remember what happened to Adderbreeze's first mate, Fernleaf?" He mewed quietly.

Snowpaw thought for a moment, but didn't actually remember anyone mentioning Thornpaw's mother. "No, I don't think so. What happened?"

"Well, she went missing," he began. "Everyone thinks that she was killed by a fox or something like that. I don't belive it though."

Snowpaw paused, and locked eyes with Stormface. She didn't know what to think. "Why not?" She questioned.

Stormface nervously glanced outside of the den, then looked back at Snowpaw. "I don't know. I just don't trust Adderbreeze. Obviously I don't have any real proof that he had something to do with it, but I just have a bad feeling. Especially since he immediately became mates with Poppynose right after she disappeared," he rasped. "It's like he wanted it to happen."

Snowpaw just stared at him in shock for a moment. She didn't really like Adderbreeze very much either, but she didn't know him very

well. "Oh. That's really weird." She didn't know what else to say.

Stormface nodded. "He is a good warrior though. I'm just not completely sure what I think of him."

Snowpaw and Stormface sat in silence for a moment, lost in thought. Snowpaw stood up. "Well, it was nice talking with you. I should probably get going now," she mewed cheerfully. She was hungry and wanted to get something from the fresh kill pile.

Stormface blinked kindly. "Alright, it was nice talking to you too," he began. "I could hear your belly rumbling the whole time, so you should go get something to eat before you die of starvation," he joked.

Snowpaw dipped her head, then padded out of the den. She swiftly made her way to the fresh kill pile, and picked out a small shrew. She noticed that there wasn't as much prey as there usually was. She turned and looked around the clearing, and saw Darkpaw eating by herself. She decided to join her.

She mewed a greeting, and Darkpaw flicked her tail happily. She looked up at Snowpaw. "How was training?"

Snowpaw sat down next to her. "It was fun," she began. "What about you?" It was nice to talk to Darkpaw alone, although she wondered where Stonepaw was. She figured that he was probably still training.

Darkpaw took a bite out of the blackbird that she was eating. "It was good. We got to do battle training today."

Snowpaw opened her jaws to speak, but stopped when she saw Silvershade approaching. Her mother looked somewhat uneasy. "Have you seen Nightpaw?" She mewed.

Snowpaw shook her head. "I haven't seen her all day."

Darkpaw looked up from her prey. "She was gone when I woke up."

Silvershade shook her head slightly. Worry clouded her deep blue gaze. "Okay, thanks," she mewed quietly. Without another word,

she turned and padded away.

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Sorry about missing the last update. I've been really sick for the past few days, so it's been hard for me to write. I also made this chapter a bit longer to make up for the last short chapter, and missing an update all together. I really appreciate your understanding.

I also wanted to let you guys know that I'm actually working on a warriors guidebook right now. I've decided that I'm going to wait until its finished before publishing it, rather than posting it chapter by chapter. It should be finished soon, so keep an eye out for that if you're interested!

Also, I know that these first few chapters have been somewhat boring. It's just so you guys can get to know the characters and their personalities, and so I can really build up to the climax of this book. There might be a few more filler chapters before things really start to get interesting, but I promise it won't be long! Thanks for reading :)

Chapter 5

Snowpaw's eyes slowly fluttered open. She was in the medicine den. She remembered that Ivybreeze had kept her promise, and helped her build her nest yesterday after she had eaten. She was glad to be out of the apprentice's den and away from Thornpaw, but she also missed Nightpaw, Darkpaw and Stonepaw. She pushed her thoughts to the back of her mind, and stretched out her forepaws as far as she could reach. She looked around the den to see if Ivybreeze was there, but she didn't see the white she-cat anywhere. She sat up in her nest, and only a few moments later, her mentor pushed her way through the entrance. Hawkfeather was following close behind her.

Ivybreeze's gaze flicked to Snowpaw. "Good, you're awake," she began. "Hawkfeather has a thorn in her paw, and you should come see how it will be treated."

Snowpaw was up in an instant, eager to see what her mentor was going to show her. She padded over to where Ivybreeze was sitting with the gray and cream she-cat.

Hawkfeather dipped her head politely. "Hello, Snowpaw. Are you enjoying being a medicine cat apprentice so far?"

Snowpaw nodded enthusiastically. "Yeah, it's really great! I can't wait until I've memorized all of the herbs. I want to be as good as Ivybreeze!" she mewed cheerfully. She was somewhat comforted by the fact that Hawkfeather didn't seem to dislike her. She was worried that most of the cats in the clan felt the same way Thornpaw and Adderbreeze did. Especially since Hawkfeather had a reputation for being very aggressive and powerful when she wanted to be.

Hawkfeather nodded approvingly. "I'm sure you will be. You seem very eager to learn."

Snowpaw nodded politely, then sat down and wrapped her tail around her paws. She watched Ivybreeze's movements with wide

eyes.

Hawkfeather held out her paw, and Ivybreeze bent down to sniff it. After a few heartbeats, she carefully but firmly grasped the thorn in between her teeth and pulled it out in one swift motion. Hawkfeather winced, but did not flinch. A small droplet of blood oozed out of the place where the thorn had been, and she gently licked it until it stopped bleeding.

Ivybreeze dipped her head to Hawkfeather. "That should do it. Just keep it clean, and come back to me if it still hurts after a while."

Hawkfeather thanked the medicine cat, then swiftly padded out of the den. Snowpaw turned to her mentor, and waited for her to tell her what to do next.

Ivybreeze turned her attention to Snowpaw. "You can go get something to eat if you want. We're going to check on Willowtuft after, since she's close to kitting. We should also collect herbs today." She paused for a moment. "And tonight is a half moon, which means you are going to meet the other medicine cats."

Snowpaw's ears pricked up when Ivybreeze mentioned the half moon gathering. She had been a little nervous about meeting the other medicine cats, but she was also excited to meet StarClan. Snowpaw nodded enthusiastically, then quickly padded out of the den.

She approached the fresh-kill pile, and breathed in the scent of warm prey. *The hunting patrol must have just returned not long ago. The prey is still fresh.* She picked out a blackbird, which she noticed was scrawny and small. She looked around the camp, hoping to find someone who would want to eat with her, and fixed her gaze on Silvershade. She was with Poppynose, and their heads were dipped together in a quiet conversation. Snowpaw couldn't see them very clearly since they were on the other side of the camp, but she thought she detected a hint of concern in her mother's eyes.

Snowpaw just watched the two she-cats for a few moments, unsure of what to do. Suddenly, Adderbreeze, who was mates with Poppynose, padded up to them and said something that obviously

wasn't very nice, because Silvershade's ears flattened and her eyes narrowed.

Poppynose gave Silvershade a sad look, and padded away with Adderbreeze as quickly as he had approached them. Snowpaw saw her mother's tail lash with irritation, then she got up and went in the opposite direction.

Snowpaw decided that she shouldn't bother her mother now, so she settled down to eat by herself. She was curious about what had just happened between the three warriors, but figured that it was none of her business. She took a bite out of her blackbird, but it was tough and stringy, which Snowpaw guessed was because leafbare was coming. She continued to eat it anyway, grateful that she at least had something to eat.

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Ivybreeze gently pressed her forepaws onto Willowtuft's swollen belly. "Put your paws here, Snowpaw."

Snowpaw did as she was told. "I think I feel a kit!"

"Yes, I think there will be at least three," she purred.

Flamefoot licked Willowtuft's ear reassuringly. "That's great. Do you know when they're due?"

"They should be born in about a quarter moon."

Flamefoot purred happily. Snowpaw knew that this was his and Willowtuft's first time having kits, so they must be nervous and excited.

Ivybreeze dipped her head politely. "We'll leave you two alone now," she began. "Come on Snowpaw. We should be going to collect herbs now."

Willowtuft mewed a goodbye, then Snowpaw and Ivybreeze padded out of the nursery. "Which herbs do we need to collect?"

"We need catmint, fennel, horsetail, tansy and comfrey. Do you

remember what those do?"

"Catmint cures greencough, horsetail cures infections, comfrey soothes pain in wounds and aching joints, and... uh," she paused, trying to remember what the other two do. She thought back to when Ivybreeze gave her tansy when she was a kit. What was it for again? *Oh, yes! It eases breathing.* She lifted her head confidently. "Tansy makes breathing easier, and it cures coughs. I don't think I remember what fennel does..." her voice trailed off.

Ivybreeze nodded approvingly. "Good. I haven't told you about fennel yet, so it makes sense that you don't know what it does. Fennel soothes pain in the hips. It will be especially useful for the elders during leafbare."

Snowpaw repeated it over to herself for a few moments so she would remember. *Fennel soothes pain in the hips.*

The two she-cats padded through the forest in silence. The sun still shone brilliantly though the trees, leaving a dappled pattern of light on the ground. Despite the fact that the air around them was fairly cool, the sunlight was still warm, and it felt good on Snowpaw's white pelt.

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Ivybreeze slipped through the camp entrance with Snowpaw at her heels. They hadn't had much luck with finding herbs, since most of them were already starting to wilt. They hadn't managed to find any catmint at all, either.

As the two she-cats padded through ThunderClan camp, Snowpaw looked around at her clanmates. Stormfeather and Cloudheart were laying together in a tiny patch of sunlight near the warriors den, and Russetfoot was chatting with Leafshine by the fresh kill pile. She saw Jayfrost sharing prey with Crowstar, and Tigercloud, Whitefrost and Lilywhisker were sitting close together speaking quietly. As Snowpaw watched her clanmates going about their every day life, she felt a rush of happiness surge through her. This was *her* clan. She would keep them all safe, no matter what it takes.

Chapter 6

"Are you two heading out now?" Jayfrost called out to Snowpaw and Ivybreeze.

After Snowpaw and her mentor had returned from their trip into the forest to collect herbs, they had to leave for the Moonpool right away. On their way out of the camp, they ran into Jayfrost and his patrol, which consisted of Lionflame, Ashfang, Petalstep and Brightflower.

Ivybreeze turned her gaze towards the deputy. "Yeah, we're leaving now."

Jayfrost dipped his head. "Alright, I just wanted to let you know that we met a patrol of angry WindClan cats while we were out. They didn't attack us, but I wanted to warn you just in case."

"Okay, thanks for letting us know. We'll be careful." She mewed kindly. "Come on, Snowpaw. We don't want to be late."

Snowpaw scurried after her mentor, and together they made their way through the forest. The sun was still up, but it was slowly dipping below the horizon. The air around them was cold, and Snowpaw could see little clouds of air coming out of her nose as she breathed. The grass felt cool on her paw pads, which she was actually somewhat fond of.

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Eventually, Snowpaw and Ivybreeze reached the place where they would wait for the other medicine cats. Dawnheart from WindClan was already there with Mintpool, who is RiverClan's medicine cat.

Dawnheart dipped her head politely. "Greetings, Ivybreeze. Is this your apprentice?"

Ivybreeze touched Snowpaw's shoulder with the tip of her tail. "Yep.

This is Snowpaw."

Snowpaw stepped forward. "Hello. It's nice to meet you," she mewed nervously.

Dawnheart blinked warmly at her. "Nice to meet you too," she purred.

Mintpool flicked her tail at Snowpaw in greeting. "Hello Snowpaw. I'm glad to hear that Ivybreeze has finally chosen an apprentice," she mewed quietly. Snowpaw noticed that the white she-cat looked somewhat anxious, but didn't pay much attention to it. She was nervous too, after all.

Suddenly, a light brown tabby tom emerged from behind a group of bushes. *That must be Acornpelt of ShadowClan.*

Acornpelt shook out his fur. "Sorry we're late." He padded up to Snowpaw. "You must be Ivybreeze's apprentice. It's nice to meet you," he mewed cheerfully.

Snowpaw dipped her head. "It's nice to meet you too-"

She was going to tell Acornfur her name, but suddenly stopped speaking when she saw a magnificently fluffy she-cat emerge from the same spot Acornfur had.

Snowpaw just stared at her, completely in awe. She had beautiful, long brown fur with tabby stripes, and a fluffy white chest. Her eyes were stunningly green, and they sparkled with excitement. *She's the most beautiful cat I've ever seen!*

"Hello, it's nice to meet you…" she mewed self consciously.

Cloverpaw let out a *mrrow* of laughter. "There's no need to be shy." She stepped forward and touched noses with Snowpaw. "It's nice to meet you too! You seem really nice."

Snowpaw's heart fluttered in her chest. "Thanks," she purred. *She thinks I'm nice!*

Cloverpaw responded with a purr, but was cut off by Acornfur. "We

should get going. There will be time to chat later, and it's pretty cold out."

All six medicine cats turned and began their journey to the Moonpool. Snowpaw's breath slowed as she realized that Cloverpaw fell back from the others and was walking next to her.

After a few moments, Snowpaw realized that Cloverpaw was looking at her with excitement in her eyes. She returned her green gaze, and knew she had to say something.

"So... what's StarClan like?"

Cloverpaw gazed up at the sky for a moment, then looked back at Snowpaw. "It's amazing. There are so many cats there, and they're all so friendly," she mewed enthusiastically. "Well, most of them are," she said with a playful grin.

Snowpaw purred. The two she-cats padded side by side, their pelts lightly brushing against each other. They continued to chat on the way to the Moonpool, occasionally bursting into laughter. Snowpaw liked Cloverpaw. She seemed to know exactly what to say to make her laugh.

Suddenly, Dawnheart stopped. "We're here."

Snowpaw looked over to where she was standing, and saw a pool of mirror-like water reflecting the stars. *We're here already?*

Snowpaw hadn't realized how long they had been walking, which she figured was because she was talking with Cloverpaw the whole time.

Ivybreeze flicked her tail for Snowpaw to come over to her. She suddenly remembered that she would have her medicine cat apprentice ceremony now, and her heart skipped a beat. Cloverpaw gave her a reassuring look, and she padded over to her mentor.

Ivybreeze gazed at her apprentice, eyes swelling with pride. "Are you ready?"

Snowpaw glanced back at Cloverpaw again, who was purring

happily. "Yes," she mewed confidently.

Ivybreeze touched her nose to Snowpaw's head. "Snowpaw, is it your wish to enter the mysteries of StarClan as a medicine cat?"

Snowpaw sat up straighter, and locked eyes with Ivybreeze. This was it. She was going to officially become a medicine cat apprentice. "It is."

"Then come forward."

Snowpaw padded up to her mentor, so she was standing right in front of her.

"Warriors of StarClan, I present you this apprentice. She has chosen the path of a medicine cat. Grant her your wisdom and insight so that she may understand your ways and heal her clan in accordance with your will." Ivybreeze purred happily. "Now, drink from the Moonpool, and share tongues with StarClan."

Snowpaw glanced once more at the cats surrounding her. None of them judged her. This was where she was meant to be. She leaned down, and lapped up the cool water from the dark pool of water. She felt a cold sensation run through her body, and everything went black for a few moments.

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Snowpaw's eyes fluttered open. She looked around, unsure of where she was. She was standing in an open field, which was surrounded by a forest of tall oak trees. The sun shone brilliantly, and there was a gentle breeze that rustled the leaves on the trees. *Is this StarClan?*

Snowpaw wandered around in the field for a few moments, wondering where all the cats where. Suddenly, she saw movement in the corner of her eye. She turned around, and found herself standing face-to-face with a beautiful, slender tortoiseshell she-cat with blue eyes. Snowpaw gazed at her with wide eyes, and noticed that her pelt seemed to be filled with stars.

The tortoiseshell she-cat dipped her head. "Greetings, Snowpaw. It is good to finally meet you." Her voice was soft and sweet.

At first, Snowpaw didn't know how to respond. "Thank you," she began. "May I ask what your name is?" She had to try very hard to keep her voice from going high-pitched, like it usually did when she was nervous or excited. She didn't want to look like a fool in front of a StarClan cat!

"My name is Mapleheart, and I am your mother's sister. As much as I would love to chat, I'm afraid I have bad news."

Snowpaw's heart dropped. At first, she was thrilled at the thought of even speaking to her mother's sister. Silvershade had always spoken highly of her, even though she died before she was born. But what bad news could she possibly have? Was her clan in danger?

Instead of responding, she just nodded to urge her to continue. She didn't have a clue as to what to say.

Mapleheart's whimsical gaze was locked onto Snowpaw. "The shadow that lingers will consume the flame, and rise once again."

Snowpaw's ears flattened against her head. "What do you mean?" She mewed anxiously. "Is my clan in danger?"

Mapleheart said nothing. She blinked at Snowpaw, then stood up and began to pad away.

Snowpaw didn't know what to do. Her tail was tucked in between her legs, and she stood in an unnatural, fearful-looking position. "Wait! Please tell me what that means!" She called after her.

Within a few heartbeats, Mapleheart had completely vanished. Snowpaw was left alone in the clearing, trembling with fear. She had thought that her first interaction with StarClan would be fun! Instead, she received what seemed to be a prophecy, which chilled her to the bone. What could that mean? She repeated the words in her head. *The shadow that lingers will consume the flame, and rise once again.*

Chapter 7

Snowpaw sat hunched over in the medicine den, pawing at various piles of herbs. It had snowed the night before, and there was a chill in the air that seemed to nip at Snowpaw's pelt.

It had been a few sunrises since she had visited the Moonpool, and the prophecy that she received still haunted her. At first, she tried to push the thought of it to the back of her mind, but then she eventually decided that she should be trying to figure out what it meant. She considered talking to Ivybreeze about it, but she was worried that her mentor wouldn't believe her.

Snowpaw sighed, and squinted as she looked through the den entrance. The fluffy white snow seemed to glow, reflecting the sun and hurting her eyes. Suddenly, the light was blocked and a shadow was cast into her den.

Snowpaw jumped up, heart racing. *Is this the shadow that the prophecy was referring to?* She squinted, and relaxed when she realized that it was just two of her clanmates entering her den. Sootwhisker squeezed through the entrance, followed by Ashfang.

She quickly rushed forward to greet them. "Is everything okay?" She mewed curiously. The two toms were the oldest warriors in the clan, and almost every cat had been expecting that they would move into the elder's den soon.

Sootwhisker stepped forward. "Ashfang has been coughing a lot," he began. "I've been trying to get him to come see you or Ivybreeze for a while now, but he didn't want to bother anyone." He rested his tail on his his friend's shoulder reassuringly.

Ashfang looked down at his paws. "I'm fine. Don't waste your herbs on me," he mewed bluntly.

Snowpaw noticed Sootwhisker glance at him with a hint of concern in his eyes. She stepped forward. "Nonsense. Come with me."

Ashfang looked up at Sootwhisker, then reluctantly began to follow the white she-cat, Sootwhisker close behind.

Snowpaw led the two toms to the back of the den, where Ivybreeze was sorting herbs. She mewed a quick greeting, and explained what was going on with Ashfang.

Ivybreeze had a look of concern on her face. "You should've come to see us earlier. You might have whitecough." She mewed anxiously. She was on her paws in an instant, sniffing and pawing at Ashfang's thick dappled gray pelt.

Ashfang looked somewhat annoyed, but didn't protest. Snowpaw listened intently as Ivybreeze explained what might be wrong, and how she would treat him. She didn't want to miss a single word.

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Snowpaw lay curled up in her nest, with her tail draped over her muzzle. Moonlight shone softly into the medicine den, reminding her that it was almost a full moon. She would be going to her first gathering soon.

Her gaze flicked towards her mentor's nest, where Ivybreeze was snoring gently. She sighed, then turned her attention to the den entrance. She watched as fluffy white snowflakes fell from the sky, and her eyes slowly began to close.

Suddenly, a loud yowl sounded from somewhere in the camp, and Snowpaw's eyes darted back open. Her heart was pounding in her chest, so she looked back at Ivybreeze, who was already awake and on her paws.

Silvershade suddenly came running through the den entrance, followed closely by Adderbreeze. Snowpaw was shocked when she saw Adderbreeze shove her mother out of the way, and hiss at her.

The black tabby tom shook out his fur, then turned his attention to Ivybreeze. "Poppynose is kitting," he stated surprisingly calmly.

Ivybreeze immediately flicked her gaze to Snowpaw. "Soak some moss in the pool of water and follow me. Be quick."

Snowpaw was about to reply, but her mentor was already leaving the den with Adderbreeze and Silvershade. She did as she was told, and bounded after them.

Once she reached the nursery, she was surprised to see that Adderbreeze seemed completely calm, almost as if he wasn't worried at all. Silvershade, however, was frantically pacing outside of the den entrance, occasionally stopping to listen to what was going on inside. Snowpaw padded past both of them, and into the nursery.

Another loud yowl broke the eerie silence that lingered only moments before. Snowpaw placed the dripping moss next to Poppynose, then waited for her mentor to instruct her. However, after a few moments passed without Ivybreeze saying anything, Snowpaw glanced up at her only to see confusion and anger burning in her eyes.

"What's wrong?" She mewed quietly.

Ivybreeze stood up, revealing two tiny bundles of fur underneath her. "She's already had two kits." She turned her attention to Poppynose, and spoke in an incredibly soothing voice. "Why didn't Adderbreeze come tell me you were kitting earlier?"

Poppynose sighed. "He said that we shouldn't wake you or Snowpaw up," she began. "I begged him to go tell somebody, but he insisted on staying here."

Willowtuft, who was still expecting kits and living in the nursery, spoke up. "She's telling the truth. I woke up to Silvershade and Adderbreeze arguing. He refused to leave until Silvershade got up to tell a medicine cat herself."

Ivybreeze looked completely shocked, and Snowpaw had to admit that she was as well. *Everyone knows that a kitting queen needs a medicine cat! Why would Adderbreeze do that?*

Snowpaw's thoughts were cut off by another yowl. "Is there another kit?" She mewed.

Ivybreeze still looked deeply disturbed, but she shook out her fur. "Yes there is. Come over here."

Ivybreeze placed Snowpaw's paws on Poppynose's belly, and she definitely felt something moving around. She was still worried though, and glanced back at the other two kits. "Shouldn't someone be keeping them warm?" She questioned.

Without even looking at her, Ivybreeze mewed "no," very quietly.

At first, Snowpaw was confused. She looked back at the two tiny bundles one more time, and suddenly realized what happened. The kits were already dead.

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I'm finally back! I know it's been a while since I last updated this, but I've been really busy and I'm having a lot of health problems right now. I'll try to keep updating regularly now, but it might not work out the way I want it with everything that's going on .

I'll be mostly focusing on this book, and another one that I haven't published yet, but I'll still be updating the other ones I've started as well. Thanks for reading!

Chapter 8

Snowpaw sighed out of relief. Poppynose had just finished kitting, and her third kit was alive and healthy. However, she had no idea how to tell Poppynose that the other two didn't make it. She exchanged a look with Ivybreeze, who looked just as lost as she felt. Snowpaw noticed that Silvershade had joined them in the nursery, but Adderbreeze was nowhere to be seen.

Poppynose turned her head towards Ivybreeze. "Is everything okay? Why is no one saying anything?" She mewed quietly.

Silvershade got up and moved closer to Poppynose. She gently touched her nose to her friend's head. "I'm so sorry, Poppynose. Two of your kits were stillborn." Her voice seemed choked with grief. "You did have a healthy tom, though. He's right here." Snowpaw stopped cleaning the tiny brown and white kit and watched as her mother gently picked him up and placed him by Poppynose's belly.

Poppynose let out a low whimper, and curled tightly around her only kit. "Can I see the other two?" She meowed quietly.

Ivybreeze exchanged a glance with Snowpaw, then picked up each of the kits and placed them in front of her. "I will bring them outside for their burial, but for now you need to stay with your other kit. He needs you."

Poppynose looked up at Silvershade, then down at her two dead kits. A horrible sadness clouded her gaze. "They should at least have names before they are buried," she whispered.

Silvershade nodded, not taking her eyes off her friend. "What would you like to call them?" She said softly.

Poppynose looked at the small, light brown tabby she-cat. "I think I'll call her Tinykit," she began. "And the tortoiseshell she-cat will be named Sweetkit."

Silvershade nodded approvingly. "Those are good names," she purred. "What about the tom?"

The tortoiseshell queen looked down at the kit that was suckling at her belly. "He will be called Acornkit."

Silvershade laid down beside her in her nest, and Poppynose turned her head and rested it on her side. Silvershade began gently licking her head to soothe the grieving queen.

Ivybreeze turned to Snowpaw. "I am going to bring these two kits to the medicine den to prepare them for their burial, but I want to talk to Adderbreeze first. Can you go get him for me?"

Snowpaw nodded, then turned and made her way outside the nursery. Adderbreeze was sitting there with an impatient look on his face.

He looked up when Snowpaw approached him. "What's taking so long? It doesn't take normal queens this long to give birth."

Snowpaw was confused. What does he mean by normal queens? "Uh.. she's finished now, you can go in," she mewed cautiously.

Instead of entering the nursery, he sat there and questioned her. "Great, how many kits are there?"

Snowpaw wasn't sure if she should be the one to tell him about the two stillborn kits. "Three, but-"

Adderbreeze cut her off. "Good. How many toms?"

"Just one, but I really think you should go inside…" She took a step back towards the nursery, hoping he would follow. Instead, he just stood up and glared at her. His expression changed from impatience to anger.

"Why? Has something happened?" He turned to the nursery and growled. "I guess I'll just have to go see for myself." He pushed past Snowpaw, and disappeared into the entrance. Snowpaw quickly followed behind him.

Adderbreeze stalked into the nursery, eyes blazing with anger. He stopped when he saw Poppynose curled up around her only living kit with Silvershade laying next to her, and Ivybreeze standing beside the bodies of two tiny kits. He looked directly at his mate, and let out a low growl. "How could you just let my kits die?"

Poppynose started up at him in horror. Silvershade immediately stood up and hissed at him.

"Do you even care about your kits?" He snarled. "I shouldn't have let a weak cat like you have my kits in the first place!"

Snowpaw could hardly believe what she was hearing. Everyone knows that it isn't the mother's fault if a kit is stillborn! She glanced at Ivybreeze, and saw the same confused and angry look on her face.

Ivybreeze glared at Adderbreeze with nothing but pure hatred in her eyes. "You need to leave. Now."

Adderbreeze snarled at her. "I am not leaving my only living kit with her! She might decide to kill him too."

Silvershade walked right up to him, and they stood face to face. "Leave her alone, before I force you to," she snarled.

Snowpaw froze where she was standing, feeling like she was unable to move as her mother stood between Adderbreeze and Poppynose. Were they going to fight? Her head was spinning. Why is he so angry with his mate?

Ivybreeze quickly walked over to the two snarling cats. "Adderbreeze, I told you to leave. It is not her fault that two of the kits were born dead. If you are just going to make Poppynose feel even worse than she already does, you are not wanted here."

Adderbreeze unsheathed his claws. "That is my kit. You can't keep me away from him."

Silvershade didn't take her eyes off of the arrogant gray tabby tom. "How dare you accuse her of killing her own kits!" She spat.

Adderbreeze looked as though he was going to claw Silvershade's face to shreds. "Fine. From this moment on, she is no longer my mate." He growled. "And that is not my kit. I want nothing to do with it." His green eyes were glowing with fury. "At least I have one kit who isn't a complete disappointment." He swiftly turned around, pushed past Snowpaw, and crept out of the nursery.

Snowpaw just stared after him in disbelief. She thought she would've pounced on him and torn him to shreds if he didn't leave when he did, despite the fact that he is much bigger and stronger than her.

Poppynose was trembling. Her green eyes were full of fear and sadness, and she curled around Acornkit even tighter. Snowpaw felt horrible about what she just witnessed. Poor Poppynose. *I can't believe that any cat could be as cruel as Adderbreeze was.*

Silvershade touched noses with Snowpaw. "You did good today," she mewed gently. "I'm going to move back into the nursery for a while. Poppynose needs someone to stay with her."

Snowpaw blinked warmly at her mother. She was glad that Silvershade was so kind and understanding. Poppynose would be okay here with her. Snowpaw watched as Silvershade curled around her friend and whispered encouragingly to her.